domestic prices, consumer preferences, and varieties traded. Low international demand and better crop production in rice consuming countries has led to the reduction in rice exports from India during the current financial year. Decline in export of cotton is due to the fact that the domestic prices of *kapas* are higher as compared to international prices.

(f) Targets fixed for exports of rice and cotton are as under:—

Year	Rice (US $ Million)	Quantity of Cotton in lakh bales (of 170 Kg each) released for exports
1996-97	706	14.42
1997-98	676	8.2 5.0
1998-99	1057	5.0
1999-2000	1035	

Rice targets are for the period April-March. Cotton released for exports is for the period October-September.

Recovery of Dues from Senior Politicians

*315. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a suo moto action, the Delhi High Court has directed Government to initiate immediate necessary action for recovery of dues from senior politicians, including former Prime Ministers, who had been allotted accommodation beyond their entitled category;

(b) whether the Court has further restrained Government from making any such allotment in future without bringing it to the notice of the court; and

(c) if so, what follow-up action is proposed to give effect to this directive?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAG-MOHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Hon'ble High Court, in its order dated 27.10.99, in WP(C) No. 2560/97 has directed, inter alia, that the Government should follow their own guidelines and any allotment outside the existing guidelines be made only with the approval of the Cabinet Committee and after intimation to the Court.

(c) Follow up action is being taken in accordance with the orders of the Hon'ble Court.

Reduction in Import of Newsprint

*316. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan of Government to reduce import of newsprint in this country;

(b) if so, what is the exact plan; and

(c) the reasons to import so much of newsprint?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Newsprint is classified under Exim code sub-heading 48.01 and import is permitted without an import license, subject to Actual User condition, by thost holding "Registration Certificate" issued by the Registrar of News Papers for India (RNI), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The demand of newsprint in the Country is met both by import and indigenous production and the quantum of imports in a particular year is dependent on the demand and supply position. However, a number of steps have been taken to increase the indigenous production of newsprint so that dependence on imported newsprint reduces gradually. These steps include the following:

(1) Newsprint Industry has been delicensed.

(2) Newsprint has been exempted from excise duty.

(3) There is a concessional rate of Custom Duty @ 5% on pulp for manufacture of newsprint.